

## **Resource and Waste Strategy for Devon and Torbay – options for working closer together**

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

**Recommendation:** that the committee approves the proposal to look at converging some elements of the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee authorities' services.

### **1. Summary**

Following on from the successful implementation of the Devon aligned option whereby authorities have aimed for the same service offer e.g. separately collected materials and frequency of collections, the authorities are now looking at elements of the services where there could be further convergence that would benefit both the service itself and potentially the residents of Devon and Torbay. This report looks at some of the options.

### **2. Introduction**

Since the review of the Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay (RWMS) in 2013 the authorities have been aiming to align key elements of their services. This is complex due to different contract periods and due to the historic and organic development of each service in each district and Torbay. Nevertheless, with the implementation of the Shared Savings Scheme (whereby the County Council shares its savings with any district making a significant change to their service which reduces the County Council's costs) most districts have modified their services to meet the aligned option. Diagrams 1 and 2 show how the services have aligned since 2013. There is no doubt that aligning services can bring cost savings to the public purse, and also other benefits such as allowing consistent communications across Devon and Torbay when encouraging residents to reduce, reuse and recycle and how to make better use of their recycling and residual waste services. This report looks into further alignment of elements of the services which would benefit service delivery, improve customer satisfaction and understanding, and facilitate consistent communications across Devon and Torbay.

Diagram 1 - 2013



Diagram 2 – 2022



Note: South Hams – 50% of households have a kerbside sort weekly collection which includes food waste. 32% of households are on a comingled weekly recycling collection and that doesn't include food waste. 18% have a fortnightly sack recycling service. Exeter are starting to offer a small number of properties a food waste collection.

### 3. Proposal

At a workshop in May members and officers looked at a shortlist of proposals from more than 20 different service areas. The following table shows the areas which the authorities are planning to consider for early convergence.

Service area	Proposal	Notes
Garden Waste Collection Service	Suspension of two collection services at Christmas.	Most of the authorities suspend their service over the Christmas period. Alignment would avoid confusion for residents.
Core Collection vehicle types for kerbside residual and dry recycling	Work together to procure fleet when opportunities arise.	Using the same vehicles for collection services allows potential economies of scale for procurement and also sharing of best practice, training, maintenance and emergency operations. Exeter could not be party to kerbside sort vehicles currently due to having a different collection method.
A No Side Waste Policy	The majority of authorities have a “no side waste policy” and within the next 12 months all those with residual waste wheeled bins could implement this. A limit on the number of bags set out in relevant authorities could also be considered.	A “no side waste policy” encourages residents to recycle everything they can by encouraging them to use all of their bins correctly. Residual waste will therefore decrease if this policy is implemented enabling an increase in the recycling rate, and potentially an overall reduction in waste as residents realise they can reduce their waste.
Service Standards	Proposed alignments include: missed collection 48hrs, container delivery time 10 working days.	There are a range of standards across the authorities and to bring them into line would give a consistent customer experience across Devon and Torbay.
Material sales outlets	An annual check on membership of joint contracts and the potential for new joint contracts to be implemented.	The authorities can benefit from the option of joining countywide contracts for paper, glass, textiles and bulk haulage. Further economies of scale could be enabled by expanding to other materials & this needs to be reviewed regularly.

These options will be looked at further and introduced where agreed by all authorities to do so within the next 12 months.

#### 4. Options/Alternatives

There are many other areas where convergence of services could be considered further and some of them are listed below. More work needs to be undertaken to assess the benefits of doing so and any proposals will be brought to a future committee for debate.

- Kerbside collection methods including bin capacity, colours, and provision of lids. Until the Government's proposals for Extended Producer Responsibility, Consistency and a Deposit Return Scheme are clear it is too soon to be changing collection services, however this will be considered at a later date.
- Bring Banks are placed around the county and there is potential for rationalising the provision of banks to specific locations and/or specific materials where they will benefit the public but also optimise the service the authorities provide.
- Bank Holiday working is practiced in some authorities but not others. A cost benefit analysis is proposed to better understand the options.
- Variability in charging. Authorities charge for a range of services including Bulky Household Waste, Garden Waste and replacement containers. These charges vary across the county for a variety of reasons. There may be potential to optimise charging regimes for ease of communication for example. However, until the Government gives clarity on the Consistency proposals this cannot easily be progressed.
- Communications to residents are provided by individual councils and also through Recycle Devon. Most councils use Incab technology which also provides the opportunity to understand better residents' recycling habits. The closer services are aligned the easier it is to offer countywide communications and this will enable better resident understanding & lead to improved waste reduction and greater recycling.
- Operational staff training and development is offered by all authorities. However, there is potential for sharing best practice for example via a countywide video.

## **5. Consultations**

There has been no specific consultation on these proposals. However, the RWMS did have an associated consultation and when asked by what means waste reduction could be achieved, 52.2% agreed that this should be through operational service policies and 89.5% agreed this should be through community engagement. The proposals above will include both these means. See consultation results link in committee report Agenda Item 8 page 73 ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee, 16/06/2021 14:15](#).

## **6. Strategic Plan**

Responding to the climate emergency is the key area in the Devon Strategic Plan that this work relates to. The proposals will assist the authorities to further reduce, reuse and recycle waste and conserve resources thereby aligning with the Strategic Plan's aim of "Ensuring resources are used more efficiently by waste reduction, re-use and recycling".

## **7. Financial Considerations**

There are not expected to be any significant costs associated with these proposals. If anything, there are likely to be reduced costs, for example, a no side waste policy should result in less residual waste and more recycling. Procurement costs could

also be reduced through sharing best practice in relation to vehicles for example, and material income could potentially be increased with joint contracts.

## **8. Legal Considerations**

There are no specific legal considerations.

## **9. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)**

The RWMS was accompanied by an Impact Assessment, see Agenda Item 8 page 75 ([Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee, 16/06/2021 14:15](#)

The work of the local authorities in relation to waste management is aimed at reducing, reusing and recycling waste, thereby reducing its environmental impact and its impact on Climate Change. It is considered that the proposals will result in positive impacts in relation to the environment and climate change, e.g. no side waste policy increases the public's understanding of the need to reduce waste and recycle correctly when accompanied by appropriate communications; sharing best practice in vehicle technology could lead to purchasing more sustainable vehicles.

## **10. Equality Considerations**

The RWMS was accompanied by an Impact Assessment, see link in paragraph 9 above.

Converging of some elements of local authority waste services will result in more consistent communications which will help all residents better understand how to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste. Inequality of services across Devon will be addressed as the work progresses, enabling improved customer service.

## **11. Risk Management Considerations**

No risks have been identified.

## **12. Public Health Impact**

Dealing with waste in a safe way in line with the waste hierarchy is a fundamental approach within the RWMS. There are not expected to be any negative impacts on Public Health as a result of these proposals.

## **13. Summary**

Converging of waste management services where appropriate will have cost benefits, environmental and climate change benefits as well as improving customer relations and services to residents. This work will build on the great progress already made in aligning services across Devon.

Meg Booth  
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Electoral Divisions: All

**Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers**

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**Background Paper**

**Date**

**File Reference**

Nil

Resource and Waste Strategy for Devon and Torbay – options for working closer together - Final